

Vegetable of the Month

LEEKs & GREEN ONIONS!



This month's vegetable of the month highlights two often forgotten members of the onion family — Leeks and Green onions (scallions). Leeks and green onions look similar they both have bulbous-like ends, fringed roots, and long leaves. These vegetables have an established food history, with usage from European to Asian cuisines, thus illustrating their versatile nature.

Leeks

Leeks look like a giant scallion and are related to both garlic and the onion. Native to the Mediterranean region, this vegetable dates back to around 4000 BC. Although its flavor and fragrance are similar to its relatives, they are slightly sweet tasting and often served as a side dish.



Selection

Leeks are found in markets year round with a peak during fall to early spring. Select leeks with clean white bottoms making sure that the ends are straight and not larger than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, otherwise they will have a tough texture. The tops should be green, crisp and fresh-looking. Small to medium leeks (less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter) are the tenderest.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (67g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 25 Calories from Fat 0

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 10mg 0%

Total Carbohydrate 6g 2%

Dietary Fiber 1g 4%

Sugars 2g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 8%

Calcium 2% • Iron 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g	
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g	
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg	
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg	
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g	
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g	

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Storage

Refrigerate leeks, unwashed, in a loosely fitting plastic bag for up to one week. Storing leeks in plastic helps them hold onto moisture and keep the odor from spreading to other foods.

Preparation

Leeks carry some dirt especially in between the layer of overlapping leaves. Begin cleaning by removing discolored leaves and trimming off green tops and root tips. Cut the leek lengthwise by inserting a knife from the base. Spread the leaves and rinse thoroughly. Placing the fanned out leaves in a bowl of water and gently moving the leaves will loosen any remaining dirt.

Leeks make excellent side dishes and appetizers but can also be added to many entrees including soups, stews, quiches, and salads.

This delicate vegetable cooks quickly and overcooking them will result in a slimy and soft product. In addition, they store heat well and will continue to cook even after the heat source is removed.



Make Leeks Part of Your 5 A Day Plan

- Bake, broil, braise, sauté or microwave.
- Serve cooked leeks alone, seasoned with lemon juice, and herbs.
- Boil, drain and place in a casserole; season with grated cheese and bread crumbs, then bake until bubbly.
- Add to egg dishes, like quiches and frittatas.
- Include sliced or pureed leeks to soups, stews, and stocks.
- Add thin sliced leeks to salads.
- Combine leeks with other vegetables like carrots, squash, and beets for a colorful side dish.



Green Onions/Scallions

Green onions or scallions are really immature onions. Scallions are harvested while their tops are still green and before the bulb takes its full shape. Green onions can be eaten raw or cooked and have a milder flavor than their onion relative.

Selection

Purchase only green crisp tops and white bottoms. In general, the more slender bottoms will have a sweeter taste.

Storage

Scallions wilt within a couple days, so it's best to use them immediately. However, if you must store them, refrigerate them in a tightly closed plastic bag up to one week.

Preparation

Rinse the scallions thoroughly as dirt may be lodged between the leaves. Trim any wilted parts and the tip of the white root. The entire scallion can be chopped or sliced and added to any of your recipes for added flavor.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (25g)	
Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 10	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 2g	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Saturated Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	



Make Leeks Part of Your 5 A Day Plan

- Trim off roots and 2 inches off tops, grill until tender and streaked with brown marks.
- Add chopped green onions to cooked rice or other favorite grains.
- Add sliced green onions to stir-fry dishes, salads, and dips.
- Slice green onions into a potato or baby greens salad.

Recipes

Bacon, Ham and Leek Quiche

Makes 8 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health/Burma Farms, Inc.

6 strips turkey bacon

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-sodium ham, diced

12 leeks, thinly sliced

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-fat Swiss cheese

1 Tbsp flour

1 cup egg substitute

1 cup fat-free half and half

1 cup skim milk

1 prepared 9-inch pie shell

Fry bacon until crisp. Drain. Reserve 1 Tbsp of drippings. Fry leeks and ham in bacon drippings until leeks are tender (5-10 minutes). Drain.

Mix Swiss cheese with flour. Set aside.

Beat egg substitute add cream, and milk. Add cheese and flour mixture. Mix well. Stir in crumbled bacon, ham and leeks. Mix well. Pour mixture into a 9-inch pie shell. Bake at 375 degrees for about 45 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 186, Protein 17g, Fat 4g, Calories From Fat 21%, Cholesterol 21mg, Carbohydrates 19g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 396mg.

Potatoes and Leeks with Chicken

Makes 8 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health/Prince Edward Island Potato Board

2 Tbsp olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 Tbsp chopped fresh ginger root
2 tsp curry powder or to taste
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp crushed, dried chilies
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp Allspice
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp Cinnamon
3 leeks, trimmed and chopped
3 potatoes, peeled and cut in 1" chunks
1 cup low sodium tomato sauce
2 cup low sodium chicken broth
3 cup Butternut squash, peeled and cubed
2 red peppers, diced
4 chicken breasts, boned
1 Tbsp olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

Heat oil in large saucepan or Dutch oven. Add garlic, ginger, spices and leeks. Cook a few minutes until tender. Add potatoes, tomato sauce and chicken broth. Cook 10 minutes. Add squash and peppers; cook 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Lightly brush chicken breasts with oil. Grill approximately 10 minutes on each side, or until juices run clear. Cut each chicken breast into 3 or 4 large pieces and add to sauce. Reheat just before serving. Sprinkle with cilantro.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 247, Protein 18g, Fat 7g, Calories From Fat 7%, Cholesterol 35mg, Carbohydrates 31g, Fiber 6g, Sodium 82mg.

Pumpkin Soup with Leeks & White Wine

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Ida Rodriguez for Melissa's Variety Produce Recipe

6 leeks split in half lengthwise

2 Tbsps olive oil

3 cloves garlic, crushed

4 sprigs Thyme

2 bay leaves

5 sprigs Parsley

1 cup white wine

1½ pounds pumpkin peeled

5 cups low sodium chicken stock

½ cup skim milk

½ cup fat-free half and half

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil. Add the leek and garlic, stirring to coat with the oil. Sweat until the leek is fragrant and soft, but not brown. Add the thyme, parsley and bay leaves. Cook 2 minutes. Turn the heat to high and add the wine. Reduce to 2 Tbsps; add the stock and the pumpkin. Simmer until the pumpkin falls apart, 20-25 minutes. Discard the herbs. Puree the soup, add milk and cream. If soup is too thick add a little more broth. Stir and serve.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 292, Protein 10g, Fat 10g, Calories From Fat 30%, Cholesterol 5mg, Carbohydrates 42g, Fiber 6g, Sodium 197mg.

Green Onions and Lemongrass Rice

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Ida Rodriguez for Melissa's Variety Produce Recipe

2 Tbsp vegetable oil

2/3 cups onion, finely chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp turmeric

1 cup white rice long grain

$1\frac{3}{4}$ cups water

2 stalks lemon grass 12 inches each cut into 2 inches long pieces

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

1 cup green onions, chopped

Heat $1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp oil in heavy medium saucepan over medium heat. Add 2/3 cup onion and turmeric and sauté 5 minutes. Mix in rice. Add water, lemongrass and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt and bring to simmer. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, about 18 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand covered 10 minutes. Discard lemongrass.

Heat remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add green onion and sauté 1 minute. Add rice and stir until heated through.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 250, Protein 4g, Fat 4g, Calories From Fat 14%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 49g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 250mg.

Avocado Green Onion Party Dip

Makes 7 servings

Each serving equals one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health

$\frac{1}{2}$ medium avocado, seeded and peeled

1 cup low fat cottage cheese

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain, non-fat yogurt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup green onions, sliced

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup carrots, shredded

1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup non-fat mayonnaise

2 cups broccoli florets

1 cup cucumber slices

28 melba toast rounds

Dice avocado into small pieces, toss with lemon juice and set aside. In food processor or blender, blend cottage cheese, yogurt and mayonnaise until smooth. Add cottage cheese mixture to avocado, gently stirring in onions and carrots. Cover and chill. Serve with vegetable crudité's and melba toast rounds, allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetables, 4 melba toast rounds and 8 Tbsp dip per serving.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 90, Protein 6g, Fat 3g, Carbohydrates 11g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 255mg.